(b) whether the retention-pricing scheme of fertilizer companies has already been abolished;

(c) if so, who would be the ultimate beneficiary of change of scheme of fertilizer policy;

(d) whether farmers would get benefit out of it; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) to (e) The new pricing policy for urea units, being formulated keeping in view the recommendations of Expenditure Reforms Commission, is proposed to be introduced *w.e.f.* 1.4.2003 and will replace the existing Retention Price Scheme. The new policy will be in the shape of Group Concession Scheme, which will aim at greater transparency, uniformity and efficiency in subsidy disbursements to urea manufacturing units and will induce urea manufacturers to take cost reduction measures on their own and be competitive. The new pricing policy will not effect farm-gate price of urea as farmers would continue to get urea at statutorily notified Maximum Retail Price.

Relief package for FACT and MFL

369. SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN:
SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:

Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering relief packages for Fertilizers and Chemicals Travancore Ltd. (FACT) and Madras Fertilizer Ltd. (MFL); and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) and (b) Government of India have already granted the following financial reliefs to the Fertilizers And Chemicals Travancore Ltd. (FACT) and Madras Fertilizers Ltd. (MFL) in March, 2002 and July, 2002, respectively:

FACT

(i) Waiver of outstanding interest amounting to Rs. 226.88 crore for the period from 1998-99 to 2001-02 on the OECF loan drawn from the Government of India by FACT for its Ammonia Project at Udyogamandal.

(ii) Moratorium on principal repayment of FACT up to 31.3.2002 on the balance OECF loan amounting to Rs. 378.20 crore drawn from Government of India.

(iii) Waiving levy of penal interest on FACT for past defaults in repayment of principal and interest of the OECF loan after assistance as at (i) & (ii) above.

MFL

(i) Waiver of interest amounting to Rs. 65 crore out of the outstanding interest as on 31.3.2002 on the loans availed by MFL from the Government for the Revamp Project.

White Paper on Union Carbide

370. SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:
SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN:

Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Bhopal Gas tragedy affected people have demanded a White Paper on criminal proceedings against the Union Carbide and immediate distribution of Rs. 1500 crore compensation still left with the Central and State Governments through a memorandum submitted to Prime Minister on 29th October, 2002; and

(b) if so, the details of their demands and Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) and (b) Government have seen press report containing a proposal for a White Paper on the issue of criminal proceedings against Union Carbide and related